Invective

Against Rome

On Behalf Of

Pope Formosus

(Anonymous)

An English Translation

Editor: D.J. Stride

…of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the Book of Life, and from the holy city, and from the things written in this book.

We have learned that in the holy Roman Church, the mother of all Churches, having neither spot nor wrinkle nor anything of the sort, something new, and unseen and unheard-of, has recently happened – which we admit more with weeping than with disputing. Indeed, we waste away with terror. Being broken and saddened and in overwhelming astonishment, we would choose silence over speech. But who can keep silent their thoughts here?

That crooked – alas! – and most savage serpent, who by crafty deception expelled the first progenitors from the joys of paradise, now hissing, raises its neck with three-forked tongues. It does not cease to disturb the Roman Church with its venom. But the divine right hand of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will utterly crush the Lernaean serpent, lurking in the marshes of Arcadia, to whom, when one head was cut off, three grew back. He who made blessed Peter walk upon the waves with dry feet will cause His Church, tossed on every side by the immense waves of the sea, to reach the harbour of salvation; and, after crossing the Jordan and the destruction of Jericho, He will permit it happily to enter the eternal joys of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Yet it is a mystery, and a very wonderful one, that while all the Churches, both on this side of the [Mediterranean] sea and beyond the sea, remain in their own state, the Roman Church alone, struck by stormy waves, overflows with its own sailors close to death. Let us therefore return to the matter proposed, and rather than lamenting, let us recount the scandals whereby Rome scandalises both small and great alike.

The secular laws and the canons, and even barbarian statutes, decree and in every way determine that violators of tombs are to be counted among the infamous – clerics are subjected to canonical rules, and laymen, having been publicly convicted, as our elders judged, are to be counted among the reprobate and assigned three years of penance.

Alas! alas! alas!

How does the city sit solitary that was full of people! She has become a widow, who once was the mistress of the nations! The princess of the provinces has been made subject to tribute! O Rome, your founders Romulus and Remus – whom one womb bore – your walls did not receive to reign together. Corrupted by fratricide, you delivered one to death, the other, wielding the Quirinal sword, establishing for you capital laws…

To the peoples of the whole world, you gave lords, Peter and Paul, princes of the city of Apollo: one you crucified, the other you beheaded with the sword among murderers. As a certain wise man said:

"Had the merit of Peter and of Paul not cherished you,

Rome, poor wretch, long ago you would have perished."

Is this the repayment – such that in neither sight nor in speech you can be called kind?

Recently we heard from brethren, and we learned it was debated in synod, that your patron Formosus the pope, brought up in the very cradle in your bosom, elected by bishops, clergy, and the populace to receive the summit of apostolic loftiness, enthroned in the sacred See by pontiffs in such offices – that after the end of this life it was not permitted for him, once lifeless, to rest in an underground tomb.

His corpse, buried for nine months, you dragged by the feet from the grave, and as if this were Saul through Samuel you recalled him from the dead. You consulted him, and you made him sit in the synod. If, like the spirit of Samuel, he had spoken, perhaps he would have said: *"Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me."*

Although he did not speak, you and your sons will nevertheless descend to hell; but he, received by angels, has long since departed to the heavenly ones.

O unheard-of crime! O unseen wickedness! O sacrilege never before attempted! The one whom from infancy you nursed with milk, fed with solid food, instructed with letters, and by ecclesiastical grades – his worthy morals meriting it – you conveyed to the pontifical summit. You recalled him from preaching to the most pagan nation. When he returned you received him with joy. Yet through your evil, you cast out an exile far from his homeland. You ought not to have treated him so.

But afterwards he was received again, and restored to his former rank from which he had been removed (we know not whether by zeal or by fault). He served in the battle-lines of Christ as he ought.

After Pope Stephen [V], son of Hadrian – whom that same Formosus had consecrated – departed the way of all earth, your bishops and magnates, your clergy and people, and every hand of the common crowd gathered, and they came to the See of Porto, situated within the City, over which Formosus presided, acclaiming him pope and supreme pontiff.

He refused and contradicted, and clasped himself to the altar. They violently dragged him away with the pall which covered the altar, and, having dragged him away, with praises and choirs enthroned him in the See of blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles.

Placed in the Apostolic See, he bestowed many good things, rebuilt churches, erected, constructed, adorned and decorated them, performed consecrations, ordained deacons, priests, and bishops, from whom afterwards the supreme holy Apostolic See received its adornment. He governed your clergy and people with wondrous moderation, and crowned the emperor Lambert with the imperial diadem.

Did you, O Rome, consent to the election of Formosus? Say yes or no. But you cannot deny it. The whole world is witness of this fact. You sent to the See of Porto – second within your walls to the Apostolic See – asking Formosus to leave it and preside over you as bishop.

Him resisting and by no means agreeing to your invitation, you violently dragged and tore him from the foot of the altar, and with banners, songs, hymns, proclamations, and praises enthroned him in the most lofty citadel of the Apostolic See. You favoured, adored, swore oaths to him; whom he blessed, you blessed; and whom he cursed, you cursed.

And, O Rome, what more will you add? After the end of this life he was laid with his fathers; and flesh to earth and dust to dust being joined, his spirit, as we believe, was led and carried to the stars.

But you, O Rome, striving to anticipate the future and dreadful day of judgement, having gathered a horrible synod, after nine months, you dragged him, already withered and almost turned to dust, from the grave; and him whom when alive you once feared, you judged when dead by judgement.

If the Roman pontiff when alive is judged by no one, when dead shall he be judged by anyone? If he were questioned, what would he answer? If he answered, all that horrid assembly, terrified by fear, would be scattered one from another, would depart from the place, and would go out one by one; and the Lord would say to him: *"Formosus, who has condemned you?"* And he would say: *"No one, Lord."* And the Lord to him: *"Neither do I condemn you."*

If that wondrous, mighty-handed king and psalm-singer David were present, he would play the harp and say: *"Will you work wonders for the dead? Or shall physicians raise them up, and will they praise you? Will anyone tell in the grave of your mercy, and your truth in destruction? Will your wonders be known in darkness, and your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?"*

Perhaps the spirit of Formosus might approach while David played.

Yet, as we see, setting aside the reverence of all Scriptures and of the ancient Fathers, you disinterred, … cut off the hand, and threw it into the Tiber.

Let us therefore cry out with the prophet Joel and say: *"Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land. Has this been done in your days, or in the days of your fathers? Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to another generation."*

And again: *"Gird yourselves and lament, and wail, priests; howl, ministers of the altar; come in, lie in sackcloth, ministers of my God; for sacrifice and libation have perished from the house of your God."*

Perhaps someone will say: "Formosus lived excommunicated; he was a despoiler, an usurper, and an invader; the consecrations which he performed are void. He had nothing, and gave nothing."

But we reply to these things: *"As I live," says the Lord, "this proverb shall no longer be in Israel."*

Did the king and his nobles, with a battle-line, lead Formosus to Rome, and without the consent of bishops, and also of the senate and the Roman people, set him crowned upon the tribunal? Far from it!

Your princes, phalanxes and satraps, your common crowd and schools, from greatest to least, elected, acclaimed, praised, and adored him. The bishops, with the sacred Lateran order, enthroned him.

The whole world recalled his celebrated name. The priestly order, with festival and daily solemnities of masses, in the register of the secret Eulogy and with public praises, proclaimed his name throughout the whole orb of the lands.

How then do you wish to extinguish the name of Formosus, which the world has published in threefold manner, and which has thundered from the rising of the sun even unto the earth's end?

Does the name of Peter, Prince of the Apostles, stand? Let also the name of Formosus, his vicar, stand.

Does the name remain of the apostles, who held the place of blessed Peter? Let also the name of Formosus remain. And as the name of Nicholas, Adrian, Marinus, John, Stephen, and others flourish, so let the name of Formosus flourish also.

It is also said: *"It was not lawful for him, after deposition, to minister; and if he did minister, it was not lawful to migrate from city to city."*

Let us therefore go through each point and thoroughly examine those things which seem just, possible, useful, honourable, and confirmed by the authority of the holy Fathers. For concerning the injured and condemned it is written in the Psalms: *"Shall he who falls not also rise again?"*

But concerning those who change their See and migrate from city to city, the Lord says in the Gospel: *"If they persecute you in one city, flee to another."*

There is a difference between necessity and usefulness, versus the ambition of greed and presumption and one's own will and usurpation. Likewise, he who is condemned by canonical laws for the blemish of spite and envy, or convicted of some crime and stained by heretical corruption.

For the sake of usefulness, blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, migrated from Antioch and was transferred to Rome.

Eusebius Pamphilus [Eusebius of Caesarea], in the sixth book of the *Ecclesiastical History*, relates that Alexander, bishop of a city of Cappadocia, when he had come to

Jerusalem for the sake of prayer, was detained by its citizens, and was appointed in the place of Bishop Narcissus; and thereafter, for the rest of his life, presided over that same Church.

Among the ancients, a bishop migrated from one city to another without any distinction, when usefulness called. It is necessary to apply that same rule here. Those who forbade the enthronement of Proclus were lying.

Let it suffice for now to have mentioned these men. More examples we shall later recall to memory.

Meanwhile, let us return to the city of Rome, so that we may address its citizens.

The case of Pope Formosus is clear. Let us bring forward the examples of the holy Fathers.

The dead are not to be judged by the living. Let us show this to all, throughout the ages, more clearly than light.

Let us present the opinion of a certain bishop of Ticinum [Pavia], Ennodius by name, a most holy man:

"God willed that the cases of other men be decided through a man, but He reserved the bishop of the Roman See, without question, to His own judgement and arbitration. For He willed that the successors of blessed Peter have the privilege of so great a dignity, that the Roman pontiff be judged by no one."

You may perhaps say: *"Such will be the case in the future."*

Not so. To one alone it was given: *"You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."*

Of this Church the prophet seems to have spoken: *"If this one is humbled, to whose help will you flee? Or where will you leave your glory?"*

And concerning the dead, Pope Anastasius thus warns:

"The most blessed Apostle warns us, lest there be any offence in the Church, if we attempt to judge those who have already died. We cannot do this. For he speaks of those who presume to judge in matters that belong to God alone… Whether we live, we live to the Lord; or whether we die, we die to the Lord. To this end Christ died and rose again, that He might rule over the dead and the living. But you – who are you that judge your brother? … Let us no longer judge one another, but judge this rather: that you put not a stumbling-block or scandal before your brethren."

The Apostle warns that we should not arrogantly inflict judgement upon those about whom no one can judge more truly or better than God.

In this matter someone takes to himself a rash presumption; and because of this, the peace and unity of the Church is destroyed.

It is therefore clear that no one who has already departed this world is to be detained by human judgement.

If no subject who has been stripped of flesh is to be judged, what of the supreme pontiff, who was not to be reproved even while alive, and who, resting in the sleep of death, was torn from the tomb and thought to be anathematised?

Pope Marcellinus, although he had sacrificed to idols, was nevertheless judged by no one, because it is unlawful for anyone to judge the supreme pontiff. No one can be condemned by human judgement whom God has reserved to His own.

Not only are they not to be judged, but they are not to be seized by violent and public sedition.

Let us now come to the ordination of Pope Formosus, from whom this matter arose.

Some, as is read in the decrees of Pope Hilarius, think the episcopate is not a divine office but a matter of inheritance.

The moderation of temperance is thereby betrayed, and charity is neglected. The tunic woven of one piece from above is torn, and, being wrongly allotted, is violently rent. The shepherd becomes wolf.

This Pope Formosus did not do. He did not hold the holy Roman Church by hereditary right, nor, as is alleged, did he seize it by ambition. He could not have invaded a Church of such great loftiness.

By what crowd, by what violence, could the leadership of the whole world have been seized by a powerless, common, and simple little man? Unless he had been supported by imperial or royal or patrician or tyrannical power, so that he could have attained the summit?

Where then, O Rome, is your great nobility and your ancient, unconquered power?

If, as is alleged, he snatched the apostolic see, the entire counsel of your princes, and the strength and wisdom of your nobles, shamefully slept.

What then? Did he bind them? Or by inflicting violence upon the bishops force them to consecrate him?

For it is well known he was consecrated by those very bishops by whom his predecessors were consecrated, and to whom the right of consecration belonged.

How then can it be said: *"He had nothing; he gave nothing"*?

Behold, though it is said he had nothing, he is shown to have received; and what he received, he was able to bestow.

For he did not ascend the Apostolic See and seize the summit of so great a power without the consecration of those men – nor indeed was it possible.

Did Pope Marinus [I] give what he did not have? He certainly had it, and gave it. For who can give what he does not have?

The bishop of Caere was one of the seven bishops, just as Formosus was, but one of the Forenses. This was for the sake of usefulness and necessity, and not through pride but by the call and election of the Roman people. Just as with Formosus, he was enthroned in the holy and apostolic see.

What then, O Rome, do you assert about Marinus? Do you wish to say of him: *"He had nothing, he gave nothing"?*

Indeed, he had much, and he gave much.

And according to the voice of Truth: *"To everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall abound; but from him who does not have, even what he seems to have shall be taken away."*

You perhaps object and say: *"Marinus was not a bishop."*

Was it not Pope John [VIII] who ordained him? That John who travelled through Italy, Germany, and Gaul, correcting, raising up, and setting right the things that were crooked, wrong, and rough? Who placed and crowned both Charles the Frenchman [Charles the Bald] and Charles the German [Charles the Fat] with imperial crowns?

If you make void the ordination and consecration of John, who for years (unless we are mistaken) shone forth in the most holy See of blessed Peter and in sacred orders with apostolic favour – your princes will be like Dathan and Abiron and their accomplices, who stirred up rebellion against Moses and Aaron in the camp, against the holy one of the Lord. The earth opened and swallowed Dathan and Abiron, for indeed they went down alive into hell.

Just as they murmured against the Lord and against the princes He had appointed for them, so also do you murmur against our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ – who with the

Father and the Holy Spirit is one and true God – and against His apostles. From Him those apostles have been granted power to bind and loose in heaven and on earth.

"Through you," says the Lord by the prophet, "My name is blasphemed among the nations."

Whence it is to be understood that it would have been more fitting before the supreme Judge to correct the alleged presumption of Formosus by passing over it in silence, rather than, by breaking the bond of charity, to bring scandal upon the whole world.

O Rome, you are confused and apostatise, and are carried into madness and frenzy. Turn back to God, and you will be saved.

He Himself says by the prophet: *"Be converted to me and you shall be saved."*

Stand and contend with me: I will question you, and you answer me; and you, question me, and I will answer you.

You say the oft-mentioned pontiff Formosus did not have that which he could give. He certainly had it. He had it from Marinus, first a bishop, then supreme pope and universal pontiff. By Marinus, he was absolved and kindly received, and restored to his former honour, from which he had been cast down by the blemish of envy. Worthily and canonically, he was recalled – not as a schismatic or a heretic, but as a holy, just, and catholic man, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens.

How then did he give what he did not receive?

Nicholas [I] consecrated Formosus as bishop, knowing him to be an excellent teacher. Therefore, he sent him to Bulgaria to preach.

Formosus, bravely teaching the way of truth, the rule of faith, and the doctrine of the Christian religion to a nation once most cruel and most pagan, returned to your walls with the cross and triumph.

Afterwards, driven from your city by the filth of envy, he was later received and restored by Pope Marinus. At last, by the acclamation of the people on account of the growth of his good character, he was favourably promoted to the summit of the pontificate.

But if Formosus had nothing and gave nothing (most absurd and most profane, and a capital sin to say), then John [VIII], who consecrated Marinus, also had nothing and gave nothing. Marinus, the pope whose consecration remains intact, had nothing and gave nothing to Stephen [V] the deacon, son of Hadrian, whom he himself consecrated. Stephen afterwards became pope and was consecrated as apostolic bishop by the aforementioned Formosus in his proper turn.

If Pope Formosus had nothing and gave nothing, why do your nobles, with brazen face, adamant mind, and satanic reasoning, say: "Therefore the consecration of Marinus, whom Pope John [VIII] consecrated bishop, is invalid; the consecration of Stephen [V], son of Hadrian, whom Marinus promoted to the diaconate, and afterwards Formosus, by the election of the whole people, consecrated in the holy apostolic see, is invalid"?

Do you perhaps want to say, O Rome, piling iniquity upon iniquity, that Marinus was never a bishop?

Then also the consecration of Pope John [VIII], which he conferred upon Marinus the bishop of Caere, whether worthily or unworthily (as you say), is void.

If our apostolic John [VIII] (which is impious to say) ordained unworthily, then Marinus is not a bishop; but if he ordained worthily (as was rightly judged by the whole world), let lord John be apostolic and Marinus be bishop.

And thereafter, for the cause of usefulness and necessity, by the call of all the people, let him remain enthroned in the holy Roman and apostolic Church.

If now you profess that Marinus was not a bishop, you accuse Pope John [VIII] (may God avert it!) who consecrated him, of having been a violator of the canons and a transgressor of all sacred laws.

Either say Marinus, who was consecrated by John, was a bishop, so that you may confirm that John truly, as he was, was pope; or if you deny it, by staining all Christendom you will profess that John was a breaker of the Nicene Council and of all councils.

Moreover, also the consecration of Stephen [V], and of Sergius [III] whom Stephen consecrated to the diaconate, will be void.

And, to speak more freely, if we trace through the order of Roman consecration, we shall see – as you assert – the whole series of priestly ordinations from the time of John [VIII], who died thirty years ago, to be void and annulled (God forbid!).

For if John, who consecrated Marinus bishop, were reprobate, then Marinus will be reprobate. If Marinus was not a bishop, why in the See of Caere did he perform ordinations, consecrations, baptisms, and confirmations of the people?

If Marinus was not a bishop, Stephen [V] the son of Hadrian, who afterwards became pope, was not a deacon. After Marinus had not been bishop (handling the sacred mystery of episcopal office by usurpation), he undoubtedly fell under the vengeance of Uzzah, who presumed to touch the Ark of the Lord unworthily.

Likewise, Stephen was neither a deacon, nor could he be pope, because as you claim, he touched the sacred mystery of the diaconate unworthily. If you condemn Marinus [I], condemn John [VIII], condemn also Stephen [V], Formosus, Sergius

[III], and everyone who from that same John, Marinus' predecessor, held session with supreme pontifical authority in the apostolic see.

Let the whole world and all its inhabitants of the Christian faith cry out against you: "Because you have deceived all, and you yourself have been deceived."

Constantinople, Sicily, all Italy, Gaul, Germany (in whose regions dwell the metropolitans, who claim the episcopal suffragan groups for their own consecration) will complain and bring charges against you, because no metropolitan can perform a consecration unless he receives the pallium from the apostolic see.

From whom do Byzantium, which is called Constantinople, Ravenna, Forum Julii [Cividale del Friuli], Milan, Aosta, Arles, Lyon, the city of the Remi [Reims], Cologne, Mainz, and the other metropolitan cities receive the pallium, except from the apostolic authority?

If what you assert is true, nearly the whole world has for thirty years been in ruin. Not only to the damnation of bodies but, what is worse, to the loss of souls.

Who can count the stars of heaven or the sand upon the seashore? Such a one might be able to count the souls and bodies who for so many years have been plunged into hell without baptism and the anointing of the holy chrism. Even the solemnities of the Masses would not have been celebrated except by very ancient men. For who would bless the holy fonts, and prepare the holy chrism, or loose and bind penitents, when the whole ecclesiastical order has fallen to the depths, so that (as you with wicked boldness and rash tongue bark out) it "had nothing, and gave nothing"?

It is time that we return, as promised, to the subject at hand. We have shown that Pope Formosus was not an invader. So too we shall make clear – by the infusion of the Holy Spirit – that one who is deposed, justly or unjustly, can be restored, and that it is possible to migrate from one church to another.

Many bishops have migrated from one city to another on account of necessity and utility, and even invitation and summons, to the advantage of the holy Fathers.

The first of these, as we said, was the most blessed Prince of the Apostles [Peter] and keeper of the heavenly kingdom's keys. Alexander, as the book of *Ecclesiastical History* relates, who was bishop of a certain city in Cappadocia, did so nobly for reasons of utility and necessity.

Let us follow the rest in order: Perigenes was ordained bishop in Petris; but because the citizens of his city did not wish to receive him, the bishop of the city of Rome ordered that he be enthroned in Corinth, the metropolis, after its bishop had died, and there he presided over that church as long as he lived. Alexander of Antioch transferred Dositheus, bishop of Seleucia, to Tarsus in Cilicia. Reverentius migrated from Arca in Phoenicia to Tyre. John of Gardila was transferred to Prochonisus; Palladius from Helenopolis to Aspona.

Alexander from another Helenopolis was transferred to Adrianopolis. Gregory Nazianzen was at first bishop of a city in Cappadocia called Sasima, and then, by the consent of Saint Basil and other bishops, became bishop of Nazianzus. Meletius first presided over the church of Sebastia, and afterwards was appointed bishop of Antioch. Theosebius was transferred from Apamea in Asia to Eudoxiopolis, which had previously been called Salambria. Polycarp from … was transferred to Nicopolis in Thrace. Hierophilus from Trapezopolis in Phrygia was transferred to Antioch in Pisidia. Sylvanus from Philippopolis in Thrace was transferred to Troas. Eusebius also, from a certain small city, was transferred to Alexandria by apostolic authority.

Similarly, Felix, from the city where he had been ordained, was transferred to Ephesus by the election of the citizens and the common counsel of the bishops, other clergy, and the people, because of his teaching and good life.

One does not "pass from city to city" if he does not do this of his own whim or ambition, but is transferred for some utility or necessity, or at the urging and counsel of other peoples. Nor does he transfer from a lesser city to a greater if he does not do so from ambition or his own will, but because he was driven by force from his own see, or compelled by necessity, or for the utility of the place or the people – transferred and enthroned not proudly but humbly by others. Man sees the face, but God sees the heart.

One does not change his See if he does not change his mind.

We have said enough about the change and migration of sees. Now, about the reconciliation of pontiffs who have been justly or unjustly condemned, I will clearly state what authority teaches. John Chrysostom was judged by two councils of the orthodox, but was restored again to his church. Likewise, Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra in Galatia, was deposed but afterwards regained his episcopate.

Asclepius likewise was judged by a synod, but afterwards regained his church. Lucian, bishop of Adrianopolis, condemned by Pope Julius [I], afterwards regained the church of his episcopate. Likewise, Quirinillus, bishop of Jerusalem, was deposed but was afterwards reconciled to his church. In like manner Pope Sixtus [II] condemned Polychronius, bishop of the same church of Jerusalem, and afterwards reconciled him.

Pope Innocent [I] likewise condemned Bishop Photinus, but afterwards restored him to his church in his former position. Likewise, to Bishop Misenus, condemned by Pope Felix [III], Pope Gelasius [I], his successor, communicated and restored him to his church. Leontius, while he was still a presbyter, was deposed, but afterwards became patriarch of Antioch.

Pope Gregory IV consecrated Theodosius, whom his predecessor Eugenius had deprived of the honour of the presbyterate, as bishop of the holy church of Signia. Bishop Ibas was judged, but the holy synod canonically restored his church to him. Pope Nicholas [I]

condemned Bishop Zacharias, because when sent to Constantinople he approved the usurper Photius, who, having suddenly been made a cleric from a layman and promoted through the ecclesiastical orders without due process, had been raised to the patriarchate of Constantinople. Zacharias rejected Ignatius, a holy and just man, the true patriarch.

But Pope Adrian [II] restored Zacharias to the former state of his church. Pope Nicholas also reconciled Rothad, bishop of the holy church of Soissons, who had been condemned by a synod attended by King Charles [II], and restored him to his own church.

Pope John [VIII] condemned Anspert, archbishop of Milan, because he refused to receive the legates of the supreme holy apostolic see, and, having been summoned to a synod, disdained to come. But afterwards he restored him to that same church.

What more? If we should attempt to bring forth all the restorations and translations of pontiffs, the day would end before our discourse ceased.

To whom then shall we compare you, or to whom shall we liken you, O Rome? Great indeed … is your ruin as the sea. Who shall heal you? Your prophets have seen false and foolish things. Nor did they expose your iniquity so as to turn and heal you.

All who pass by the way have lamented over you; they have hissed and shaken their heads, saying: “Is this the city of perfect beauty, the joy of the whole earth?”

Examine, therefore, your ways, and turn to the Lord, and you shall be saved.

What then will you say to these things? It is commonly said it is foolish to restrain others when one cannot place a bridle on oneself.

By what means do you wish to rebuke others, when you have no power to correct yourself? Through ambition and sedition, by striving in warfare, your princes strive to ascend to the very highest peak of power. Persisting in their wickedness, each seeks to accomplish in action what he has conceived in mind.

For this very reason the Flood came upon the whole world, and all flesh was destroyed from the face of the earth, except for eight souls saved in the ark.

For thus Holy Scripture says: “The sons of God, seeing that the daughters of men were beautiful, took for themselves wives from all they chose.”

And to restrain the presumption of your arrogance, Truth itself says to you: “You have had five husbands, O Rome, and he whom you now have is not your husband.”

When Formosus (whom you with most cruel presumption dragged from the tomb) still lived and resided in the supreme, holy and apostolic see, he consecrated John [IX] to the presbyterate – who afterwards, according to Roman custom and consecration, ascending to the pinnacle of the papacy, consecrated Kailo, archbishop of Ravenna. Afterwards, in the holy synod convened in that same city, at which Emperor Lambert was present, John IX sat resolutely with apostolic favour.

Kailo the archbishop in turn consecrated Peter, bishop of Bologna. Peter, bishop of Bologna, a suffragan of Archbishop Kailo, consecrated John [X] (who now presides over your seat in Rome) as deacon through the steps of holy orders.

After Peter died, that same John [X] presumptuously invaded the church of Bologna while Archbishop Kailo was still alive – against all authority of the canons – and, having been consecrated, unworthily performed the solemnities of the Mass with pontifical authority and carried out illicit consecrations.

Having abandoned that church, John usurped the holy Roman and apostolic church with wicked daring. Now, according to his own whim, he wishes to loose and bind, and like

that Lucifer who wished to place his throne in the North and, lifting himself up, boasted that he would be like God, John wishes to excommunicate the catholic and universal church and to anathematise those more just and holy than himself.

Who will believe him in this? ("Let not him who girds himself boast as he who ungirds.")

God is not like man.

For if He spared not the angels when they exalted themselves, how much more must men beware lest they exalt themselves?

It is written: "Do not think more highly than you ought to think, lest perhaps, while you wish to be more than you are, you become less than you are."

Although we unworthily bear the embassy and priesthood of Christ, as the Apostle [Paul] teaches, we ask for peace, we seek concord, and we entreat you, O Rome, who are the head of us all, to be healed. We beg, in every way, that you may not so lightly cause scandal in future, through the help of Him to whom is praise, honour, might, and glory, with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for endless ages of ages. Amen.